

Amuse Me by **TheMikeWheelers (jasongracefully)**

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Summary:

The kids go to an amusement park.

Amuse Me

Author's Note:

Shoutout to everyone in the gain train for coming up with all the ideas for this fic with me.

In the summer of 1984, Mike, Dustin, Lucas, and Will included Eleven for their first day of summer ritual, going to the local amusement park.

The old place was just a short drive outside of Hawkins, and the boys couldn't think of a better place to bring El to for her first summer with them.

She'd been looking forward to it for a while, she loved hearing all the boys stories from there. Like the time it started to rain and they were able to skip all the lines, or when Will got sick on one of the kiddie rides.

She figured for the most part she knew what to expect, but that didn't get rid of her creeping anxiety as she stared up at the giant roller coaster before her.

It had just opened a few weeks previously, so even the boys were shocked at the ride.

"Yeah, there's no way in hell I'm riding that," Dustin declared.

Lucas rolled his eyes, "Don't pussy out. It'll be awesome!"

"That looks like a great way to die today."

"Will calm down, it's gonna fine!" Mike bickered.

El just continued to look at the colossal tracks, going way above her head. A pit of terror was growing and spreading out in her stomach.

The boys continued to argue, Dustin and Will were adamant that they were not riding that, meanwhile Lucas and Mike couldn't resist.

They finally agreed that Dustin and Will would sit out, the other two boys looked at El if she wanted to come.

"El, don't worry. It's not even that scary. It doesn't even go upside down or anything."

At the words "upside down" El's neck turned like lightning over to them, falling out of the trance her fear had put her in.

"Upside down?"

"No! Not that, like the ride doesn't go in loops!" Mike tried to reassure her, but her fear wasn't going to get any better at that point.

"Come on El," Will gestured over to a different ride, "We can go on that while they torture themselves."

El nodded her head and walked over to the smaller ride. The teacups. She'd been looking forward to that, a small smile making its way onto her face.

When they got onto the ride, Will was enthusiastic over it. He started to twist then around as fast as he could, which wasn't very fast as a single person. So El joined him, putting all her strength into turning the cart. Her and Will were laughing so hard they went completely oblivious to the growing discomfort on Dustin's face.

His face was turning green at an alarming rate. It wasn't until Will looked over at the sickly shade his friend had taken on until he stopped the spinning.

The teacup they sat in was still now, just moving along the track at a slow pace. El watched with concern, not knowing how to help him.

One of the workers had noticed the all-too familiar look on Dustin's face, and quickly pulled the lever shutting off the ride, not wanting to be responsible for cleaning up the effects.

"You alright kid?" He asked concerned.

Dustin nodded his head, his face finally returning to its normal hue.

“We should probably get off, right?”

“I’m fine, I swear,” Dustin spoke up this time.

El went next, “I’m going to get Nancy.” She wanted to get their chaperone for the day into this.

“Don’t do that! It’s no big deal, you were just going a little too fast!”

They finally settled on leaving Nancy out of it, but they were getting off the ride to get Dustin some water.

The trio found a cool spot under a shaded tree, with perfect viewing of the roller coaster above them. They knew Mike and Lucas were probably towards the front of the line at that point, and couldn’t wait to hear the screams from their friends.

“Is that them?” Will pointed to two people getting on the ride, just slightly too far away to tell for sure.

Dustin, now returned to normal, spoke up, “I think it is. That’s what they were wearing today, right?”

They watched as their friends took their spots, right at the front of the cart. Soon enough the ride was zooming off, the trio watched as the people were jerked from side to side, speeding by too fast to really see anything.

Though Mike and Lucas would deny it, they also let out some very embarrassing screams, which the others would never let them forget about.

When they walked out of the ride exit they rushed to greet them.

“So how was dying?” Dustin questioned sarcastically.

Lucas rolled his eyes, “It was great actually. How were the baby rides?”

“Dustin got sick on the teacups!”

“Will shut up I did not get sick!”

“Okay fine, Dustin almost got sick on the teacups, and the worker had to stop the ride,” Will corrected himself as the others laughed.

On the side Mike stood next to El, staring at her shyly.

“What did you think of the teacups?” He asked her, quietly under the sound of the other boys bickering.

El looked at him and felt a soft blush grow on her cheeks, “Good,” she answered, short and sweet.

She wouldn't dare admit it, but she couldn't form any answer more than one syllable. She was too shocked by Mike's hair, which the ride had blown back into a beautiful mess.

Pretty, she wanted to tell him, but she held her tongue, settling for staring at him subtly and thinking to herself about how pretty she thought he looked like that.

Mike must have saw her staring, he gave her a shy smile and looked towards to the ground to cover the redness his face took, matching hers.

This wasn't unordinary for them. Ever since she had come home almost a year previously, most of their conversations had been dancing on the shy flirting. Neither of them dared to raise the question of what their label was. They both knew they were most definitely more-than-friends, but what exactly they were, they didn't have a clue.

So when Dustin pointed to the snack stand, Mike intertwined his fingers with hers as they walked over.

It was at the snack stand that the group of friends came across a very important, practically life changing discovery. El had an obsession with all the greasy foods Joyce Byers would hate. Her adoptive mother had spent the past few months trying to find El some healthy food she would love, something outside of Eggo waffles.

But Joyce wasn't there, and the boys all expressed their joy at El's newest obsession.

A section of the park was decorated as a carnival. After they finished eating, the kids made it their job to explore the area.

Dustin rushed to get his face painted, a piece of art the others would cherish the opportunity to tease him about. Lucas and Will, on the other hand, insisted on going to scope out the small house of mirrors.

That left Mike and El, who agreed to just walk around and see what was there. They walked for a few minutes, until something caught Mike's eye.

It was a carnival game, one where you throw a ball to try and knock down some milk cartons to win a prize. Mike saw the blue stuffed fish you won, it was small and probably terrible quality, but he felt a sudden desire to win it for El.

The first game went, well, terribly. He wasn't a good throw, and missed the cartons by around three feet. Even the attendant snickered at this 13 year old boy. He saw it enough times, young boys who wanted to impress their crushes, only to fail miserably.

Mike pulled out another dollar for a second chance. That time he missed by only two feet. That went on for a while, Mike just couldn't seem to get the toss just right. El tried to convince him to move on, it was just a carnival game, it didn't matter, but he insisted he had to win.

After God-knows how many tries, El realized it was time for her to do something she'd never tell Mike about. When he tossed the ball, she stared deeply at it, watching it make the curve right towards the center of the cartons.

She subtly wiped her nose and looked over at him. Mike shouted out in thrill, completely oblivious to what had really just happened. But El looked at him, and saw the complete joy his face radiated, and couldn't help but shine back.

The attendant pulled out the small fish and handed it to Mike, to which he shyly offered it to El. She turned a rosy shade of pink, and thanked him, hugging the small fish up to her chest.

Little did they know Nancy was watching this interaction about 15 feet away, she was walking over to greet them when she saw her little brother's cliché, but still adorable, move. She'd become a form of wingwoman for Mike, a self proclaimed title she wore proudly.

She stopped to give a little smile, silently encouraging Mike. She went to walk towards them again, but Dustin beat her there.

Nancy, Mike, and El all looked up to him in shock, having trouble containing their snickers. His entire face was painted to look like a tiger, orange covering his face with black stripes and markings all over. He just laughed with them, completely aware of the embarrassing face paint.

Nancy, not wanting the kids to keep blowing all their money at the carnival, suggested they go on some more rides. So they found Will and Lucas and looked for a ride that interested them.

They stopped in front of one ride, with flashing lights that caught their eyes. The sign was decorated with cartoon ghosts and lasers.

The boys watched as carts went around a track and into a building beyond sight, with laser guns attached to the front, shooting at targets of ghosts on the ride.

"That's awesome!" Dustin exclaimed.

So they got on the ride, and after several jokes about how the "blasters," as the attendant called them, were really just lightsaber guns, the cart started to move.

Nancy, Mike, and Dustin were in the back row, with the other 3 in front of them. They felt as the cart lurched forward. A cackling ghost popped out from behind a crate. They all angled their guns and shot. Nancy's gun made a buzzing noise, showing she had hit it.

The ride lasted for several minutes, and quite the competition had developed between the laughing kids. The boys were pushing each other, trying to knock the other's' guns away. The competition only distracted them in the end though.

When the cart came to a halt they looked over to the scoreboard.

Nancy had won with over 2000 points, second place was Lucas, but even he had barely hit 800.

The boys declared it must be rigged, but Nancy just teased them for being sore losers.

The kids ran ahead to go on some more rides, but Nancy was called back by one of the workers to claim her prize, a large teddy bear.

“Mike!” She hissed to her brother, “Come here!”

He turned back and sped back over to her, “What do you want? We wanna go hit the haunted house before the line gets long!”

“Give this to El,” She said, holding out the toy.

Mike's face went pink, “What?! Why?!”

“Come on, I saw you struggling to even attempt to win that pathetic fish for her earlier. Give her this, it's cute!”

Mike grabbed the toy and turned away, not wanting Nancy to see the worsening blush that was erupting on his cheeks. She just smirked and backed away.

“Um, E- El!” He called out, shaming himself for stuttering over a one-syllable name.

El, up ahead with the other boys, heard Mike and whipped around. She walked back over to him and greeted with a smile.

“Uh- Nancy uh- There's this,” he sputtered out, not having the slightest idea what to say.

He pushed out the stuffed animal, “Here, uh, have this.”

El looked down at the toy and felt her heart clench. She reached out to hold the soft bear. Mike was looking down, she noticed he did that while talking to her. Whenever his face turned red he wouldn't make any eye contact, he'd just look away. To try and block her from seeing the pink tint, she guessed.

She gave him a smile that made his heart speed up, "Thank you."

He gave a weak smile back, "It's, uh, it's nothing."

"Hey! Hurry up!" Dustin was calling them now, while Lucas was making kissing faces that Mike would yell at him about later.

They walked over to the haunted house, only to be stopped right at the entrance by El, pulling their arms to stop. She was standing still, looking up in fear.

Dr. Murder's Madhouse was interestingly decorated, even from the outside. Just the sign displaying it showed a man, Dr. Murder, they presumed, next to a young girl in a hospital gown, surrounded by several dead bodies.

El saw the sign and stopped short. The boys looked back over at her, and saw she was staring right at the sign.

"El, you okay?" Dustin asked cautiously.

She didn't respond, her mind closing in on itself. The boys looked at each other, unsure of what to do.

Lucas went next, "It's just a haunted house. There's nothing really there."

"Do you want to go in?" Mike asked weakly.

She shook her head furiously.

"Um okay. I can stay out here with you while they go in?" He looked over to the boys with raised eyebrows.

"Come on, we can go sit down somewhere." He grabbed her hand.

She barely registered all he was saying to her as they walked to go find a bench, and when they did she greeted by another cruel welcome. The bench was covered in a Coca-Cola advertisement. She felt tears start dropping from her eyes and Mike saw the discomfort.

"Oh um, I've got a better idea of where we can go," He said, pulling

her away from the bench.

She followed as he pulled her towards the back of the park, there were less people there and there was a small gap between the hedges he pulled her through.

Train tracks covered in dirt wrapped around the area, with hedges separating them from the rest of the park. It reminded El of the tracks in the woods back home.

Mike gave whatever attempt at a smile he could muster, "There used to be a train ride here. It closed a few years ago but the tracks are still up, kinda a nice hideout in the park."

Instead of answering El just pulled Mike into a hug, sobbing onto his shoulder.

"Hey, it's okay. You're okay. Nothing's gonna happen."

She was quiet, and Mike beat himself up. He'd done this so many times. He'd held her through breakdowns, calmed her after nightmares, took her mind off of every reminder of the lab, yet he still didn't know how to help her. He was powerless to it all.

She continued to hug him, taking deep breaths in and out until her breath calmed down. He just held her, not knowing what to say that could have any help.

"Look at me."

She looked up, trying to focus on his face instead of the flashes her mind was reverting to.

"You're safe. Nothing here is gonna hurt you. It's just us and the guys, having a fun time here."

She nodded her head slightly. The two stood there for a few minutes, Mike listened as El's breath slowed down. She felt her eyes dry up, and everything return to normal.

"Are you okay?" He finally asked, hesitantly.

She squeaked out, "Yeah."

"Do you wanna go find the guys? They might be out by now."

El gave a soft nod, and grabbed onto Mike's hand for reassurance.

They snuck out from behind the hedges and found Dustin, Lucas, and Will getting on the line for the Ferris wheel.

None of the boys wanted to press El, so they started a discussion about their other beginning of summer tradition, their D&D campaign tomorrow.

"Come on, just tell us what it's about!"

"No way! That ruins the whole thing!" Mike yelled back.

El smirked watching her friends bicker, a small distraction she had gotten used to witnessing.

"It better be a good one, you've been planning it for like 3 weeks now!"

"It'll be fine! Don't worry!"

That's when Will nudged El, "Are you gonna play tomorrow?"

She's gotten used to watching the boys play. She had gotten involved a few times herself, but for the most part she just helped Mike with the storytelling, using her powers to create fun effects for the boys.

But she went out on a limb this time, she didn't play much, but the boys were all looking forward to it. It had to be fun. She gave a quiet, "Sure," and all the boys lit up, they'd been encouraging her to play for a while.

Around that time they were onto the front of the line, and the 5 friends climbed into the cart.

The attendant slammed the door shut and gave the required spiel, don't stand, don't attempt to open the door, all the rules the boys rolled their eyes at.

Then they were off. It was slow, but they watched as they eventually made the ascend over the park.

The boys ignored it, they'd been going on this since they were practically babies. It was too boring for them, they'd much rather one of the fast rides. But El was awestruck. She held onto the railing and peered over the edge, watching as the world got smaller beneath her.

The boys were smirking at her fascination with something they found so ordinary. But she didn't notice them, too entranced with how she could see the entire park from there, she could see the highway outside, she could see way towards the horizon.

The cart stopped at the top. Even the boys then took the moment to admire everything, it really was a beautiful view. For just a few moments, it was silent. And with 5 thirteen year olds, it had to be absolutely spectacular to make them silent, even for just a moment.

Then the cart started to move forward, and like that it was all forgotten. They were back to their conversation about the campaign, laughing how they always should, without a care in the world.

When they went to get off the ride, Mike held out his hand for El as she made the jump down.

“So what did you think of your first Ferris wheel?” He asked her.

She gave him a full smile and answered quite simply.

“Loved it.”

Author's Note:

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